



# ETHICAL MARKETING CHECKLIST

10 CONSCIOUS MARKETING PRINCIPLES TO CONSIDER BEFORE RELEASING CONTENT

Ask yourself these 10 questions before releasing your digital content to ensure that you're practicing conscious growth marketing:

## ☐ VIRAL MINDSET

**Would you be okay with EVERYONE (not just your target audience) seeing this content with your logo on it?**

Anything can go viral these days, so before you put out a piece of content, make sure you feel comfortable and confident with the entire world seeing it with your logo attached.

## ☐ AVOID EMOTIONAL TRIGGERS

**Can the message your conveying be harmful to the self-esteem or wellbeing of your audience in any way?**

Psychological trauma and mental health issues have steadily been increasing over the past decade and it'd be irresponsible to believe that social media and the internet aren't influential culprits to this.

Be mindful of any coded language, misleading information or edited photos that you use in your content. Your marketing strategy should never rely on making your audience feel insecure to generate sales. Your content should also never promote anything that could physically or emotionally harm your audience—or any audience for that matter. Nobody can know exactly what will trigger another person, so the best way to avoid harmful messaging is to ask for feedback from multiple sources from different backgrounds and be open to making the suggested changes.

## ☐ SUSTAINABLE MARKETING

**Are you helping your audience live a more environmentally and socially conscious lifestyle?**

Consumerism has made a giant, nasty impact on our planet. People are becoming more conscientious of the environmental and societal implications of their purchases and habits. If you're knowingly marketing something that will cause harm to society or the environment, you need to be upfront with your audience about that. Don't feel comfortable being upfront with your audience?

Then you may want to consider revisiting your brand values and adapting your product or service accordingly. You should feel proud of every aspect of your brand, so make sure there's nothing you feel the need to cover up or avert attention from.

## ☐ DATA COLLECTION DISCLOSURE

**Are you being transparent about the data you're collecting and how you plan to use it?**

If you are collecting data from surveys, website tracking, or any other means, you need to make your purpose clear in your messaging. We all know that a successful digital strategy requires data in order to optimize and improve content for audiences.

However, people are becoming increasingly more protective of their information and for good reason (cough, cough Cambridge Analytica scandal). Consumers are smart enough to know that their data is being used for marketing purposes so it's better to be up front and honest than deceitful. The proper disclaimers should be in place to inform your audience of what their information is being used for. Transparency is always key in conscious growth.

## ☐ SOLUTIONS-BASED MARKETING

**Is what your marketing offering something that will help your audience in some way?**

One of my favorite conscious marketing quotes is "Stop selling, start helping". Marketing is very easy when you're offering a product or service that solves a problem for your audience. Your digital marketing strategy should entirely revolve around improving the lives of your audience. Are you making a difficult task easier? Are you offering valuable information? Are you improving humanity in even the smallest of ways? Find the aspect of your brand that offers value and solutions to your audience and make that the focus of your content marketing.

## ☐ INCLUSIVITY

**Is your copy and visual content inclusive and diverse?**

Inclusive copy may feel like you're walking on eggshells, but it's really not as hard as you



may think. Just be considerate, aware empathetic and respectful in your messaging. Your content shouldn't exclude any member of your audience whether that be through copy, photos, or graphics. Use neutral pronouns, follow non-discrimination laws, use imagery with diverse people that represent your target demographic and avoid demeaning or outdated language. Simple, right? Inclusive marketing is not only respectful to your audience, but it will also help your content resonate with a wider audience of people.

## ☐ READ THE ROOM

**Does your content have the proper self-awareness in relation to the current climate of the world?**

If you're like me, you religiously plan your content calendar out at least a month in advance; however, a lot can change in a month. You have to adapt your content to align with the atmosphere of the broader community that your brand exists in. If your content feels insensitive to current events, social movements or politics, your audience will find your content tone-deaf and unappealing. Believe me, no product launch post or #OOTD story is more important than standing with your audience and empathizing with their situation. Make sure your digital strategy is flexible and able to quickly adapt to changes and trends.

## ☐ INTEGRITY

**Are you using any gimmicks that feel inauthentic to your brand?**

Brand integrity is the reputation and trust you build with your audience by upholding your standards, values and promises. Every piece of content you release with your logo on it should contribute to maintaining your brand integrity.

Attention-grabbers, appropriated hashtags, newsjacking, and clickbait may boost your engagement, but using these gimmicks will hurt your brand more in the long-run. Take the road less traveled and practice integrity in your digital strategy. This is the easiest way to earn the loyalty and respect of consumers who truly resonate with your brand.

## ☐ BE A MINDFUL ALLY

**Does your content diminish, marginalize or negatively impact any communities?**

Conscious growth requires you to examine your content through the lens of



marginalized communities. Your content should never perpetuate stereotypes, tropes, or ideas that can harm people of color, women, LGBTQ+, the disabled community, or any other vulnerable groups of people. As an ethical brand, your goal should always be to uplift and advocate for disenfranchised group, not hinder their progress.

Another important aspect of being a mindful ally is taking a stance. Silence is violence, so if you're staying "neutral" in your messaging, you are being compliant in the oppression of minorities. Words matter, so be mindful of how your content affects others and always recognize your unique place of privilege.

## **PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH**

### **Is any part of your message hypocritical?**

Creating inclusive, diverse, sustainable and socially responsible digital content is essential to conscious marketing, but it doesn't mean squat if you're not practicing it behind the scenes. You can repost and post as much progressive content as you want, but if you're not adjusting your business operations-- at every level-- to reflect your content then your audience is going to see right through you.

Conscious growth is not just a means to capitalize on social justice; it is a matter of morality. Don't just be conscious when it's trendy, be conscious in every aspect of your brand and implement the necessary internal changes to ensure you're practicing what you preach.

Check your content against these conscious marketing principles to practice mindfulness and inclusivity in your digital marketing.

No one can get it right all the time. You will make mistakes in your conscious growth efforts. But, as long as you're striving to learn and improve every day, your audience will take notice of your effort. Stay true to your core values and stretch your empathy muscles whenever you can.

*"To give real service you must add something which cannot be bought or measured with money, and that is sincerity and integrity."*

– Douglas Adams

